

III. Remarks

Claims 1, 3-11 and 13-16 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 3 has been amended, claims 13-16 have been added and claim 12 has been cancelled. Applicant does not acquiesce in the correctness of the objections and rejections and reserve the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116(b) because the Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance as discussed below; (b) does not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration; and (c) places the application in better form for appeal. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests entry of this Amendment.

In the Office Action, claims 6-11 have been allowed. Applicant gratefully appreciates the allowance of these claims.

In the Office Action, claims 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter, with claims 4-5 being rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being dependent from the rejected claim 3. By this amendment, claim 3 has been amended according to the Office's suggestion. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

In the Office Action, the Office indicates that claim 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant gratefully appreciates this indication. By this Amendment, new claims 13-16 have been added. New claim 13 includes the allowable features of claims 1 and 5; new claims 14-15 are dependent upon new claim 13; and new claim 16 includes the allowable features of claims 5 and 12.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 3-4 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mital et al. (USPN 6,189,012) in view of Campbell et al. (USPN 6,292,801). By this amendment, claim 12 has been cancelled. Applicant submits that claims 1 and 3-4 are allowable and thus respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections for the reasons stated below.

First, Mital et al. and Campbell et al., either separately or in combination, do not disclose or suggest each and every claimed feature. Specifically, the current invention includes, *inter alia*, “the hierarchical link table includes effective period data that defines effective periods for the defined hierarchical structure[,]” as recited in claim 1. As the Office admitted, Mital et al. do not disclose or suggest this feature. Applicant respectfully submits that Campbell et al. also do not disclose or suggest this feature of the current invention. Campbell et al. disclose “time-dependent associations between any owner and any data resources as long as a link exists[.]” and “the management of the start and end dates provides a time-dependent association between each child and its parent.” (Col. 8, lines 40-42 and 52-54.) In Campbell et al., however, the start dates and the end dates are used to link a data source in a parent table with a data source in a child table. The hierarchical relationship (structure) between the parent and the child is not affected by

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the start dates and the end dates. For example, as shown in FIG. 8, start date "01/02/1993" and end date "09/14/1995" may link "Sales" of the department table with Richard Moon's resource 206.241.52.32 - in the owner resource table, while start date "09/15/1995" and end date "Open" may link "Marketing" in the department table with Richard Moon's resource - 4780 - in the owner resource table. (See FIG. 8 of Campbell et al.) However, in Campbell et al., as shown in FIG. 8, the start dates (01/02/1993 and 09/15/1995) and the end dates (09/14/1995 and "open") never affect the hierarchical structure between the department table (parent) and the owner resource table (child). By sharp contrast, the current invention discloses "effective period data that defines effective periods for the defined hierarchical structure." In the current invention, for example, a node A might be a parent of a node B for a certain period, e.g., between effective start date 1999.1.10 and effective end date 1999.3.31, while node A might also be a child of node B for another period, e.g., between effective start date 1999.4.1 and effective end date 1999.6.30. The hierarchical structure between the two nodes (node A and node B) might change with different effective period date, in the current invention. In view of foregoing, Mital et al. and Campbell et al., either separately or in combination, do not disclose or suggest, *inter alia*, "the hierarchical link table includes effective period data that defines effective periods for the defined hierarchical structure." Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Second, Applicant submits that there is no motivation or suggestion to combine Mital et al. and Campbell et al. Mital et al. disclose a system for linking data items. In the Mital et al. system, "[t]he links in said links class each link an [first] object instance ... to [a second] object instance[.]" (Col. 10, lins 41-43.) In Mital et al., a link is enabled by a unique identifier of a link

(“lid”) and a unique identifier of an object instance (“oid”), the “lid” being identical to the “oid.” (See, col. 10, lines 44-52.) Thus, the Mital et al. system has its own method of linking and does not need to adopt the start date/ end date feature of Campbell et al. for linking. In addition, combining the start date/ end date feature of Campbell et al. is contrary to the principle of operation of Mital et al. In Mital et al., the links table is intentionally kept as simple as possible to contain only two columns. (See, abstract.) Combining the start date/ end date feature of Campbell et al. would add at least two columns to the links table in the Mital et al. system, which is contrary to the purpose of Mital et al. to make the links table simple. In view of the foregoing, there is no motivation or suggestion, either in Mital et al., or in Campbell et al., or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to combine the references. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Claims 3 – 5 are dependent upon claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that the dependent claims are allowable for the same reasons stated above, as well as for their own additional features.

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Applicant respectfully submits that the application as presented is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is necessary in order to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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